UTFI sees a 23% increase in online giving after transitioning to GiveCampus

THE CHALLENGE

Achieve an ambitious Leap Day goal that included transitioning to a new CRM and 6 new tools—including an online giving solution

The University of Tennessee Foundation, Inc. (UTFI) is an interdependent nonprofit corporation. Their mission is to raise financial, public and political support for the five campuses and three institutes that comprise the University of Tennessee System, which boasts an alumni base of nearly 445,000 graduates.

In November 2022, the Foundation kicked off a new phase of its CRM implementation—focusing on the alumni- and donor-facing digital tools that would replace its legacy product—with a planned go-live date of February 2024. Kate Brimer, the associate director of digital strategy and innovation (DSI) at UT Foundation, quipped that they chose the February 29, 2024, Leap Day deadline because, "we figured at least if it went badly we wouldn't have to relive it every year afterwards."

All kidding aside, many would consider an undertaking of this size and complexity to be a multi-year project—and the DSI team of six was staring down an aggressive 15-month timeline. Plus, they weren't just switching CRMs. They were also tasked with managing the integration of six new tools to replace their existing tech stack, including a new website platform and an online giving solution.

For context, UTFI had been using Anthology Encompass for more than 12 years. The DSI team maintained seven Encompass subcommunities with data running daily to Ellucian Advance. They also managed 34 giving forms and supported five campus giving days. Although the DSI team clearly had their work cut out for them, they were up for the challenge. With Phase 2 of the CRM implementation underway, they began vetting online fundraising solutions.

GIVECAMPUS

Secure an online giving platform that integrates seamlessly with ascend on Salesforce, offers familiar functionality, is easy to set up, and delivers a modern fundraising experience

UTFI demoed several fundraising platforms but ultimately chose to partner with GiveCampus in June 2023 for four key reasons.

First, GiveCampus offered a scalable, API-based integration with ascend on the Salesforce platform. The team knew that getting GiveCampus data into their shiny new CRM wouldn't be an issue.

Second, the GiveCampus platform offered familiar functionality. Features like nested browsing within designation groups, suggested gift amounts, recurring gifts, pre-populated tracking links, adjustable campaign thermometers and more meant they could keep doing many tasks the same way they did on their legacy platform. This would prove particularly helpful for admins on the backend who would be setting everything up in the new system. It would also ensure a familiar user experience for UTFI donors, which was paramount.

Third, GiveCampus offered a streamlined onboarding process, access to a dedicated Partner Success Manager, and the ability to quickly spin up giving forms and campaigns. Given the accelerated nine-month timeline they had left until their go-live date, speedy vendor response times and an intuitive user interface would prove integral to their success.

Last, but certainly not least, the DSI team was thrilled with all the modern online giving features built into the GiveCampus platform.

Kate Brimer
Associate Director of Digital Strategy and Innovation

"We knew we could handle the quick transition but what really wowed us about **GiveCampus** was all the new features and functionality."

go.givecampus.com

GIVECAMPUS

Transitioning to GiveCampus would allow UTFI to expand their payment methods, add unlimited designations to giving forms, make funds hidden but searchable, and much more. Their Constituent Management team saw an immediate use case for incentives based on gift amount, and annual giving and donor experience teams liked that they could configure different email confirmations for one-time and recurring gifts.

The DSI team was especially excited to launch tiered giving day campaigns using GC Social Fundraising. It meant that individual colleges and units would be able to host their own page and track gifts with a thermometer specific to their designation group.

Kelley Dickman
Senior Digital Strategist

"With easy, out-of-the-box tools for matches, challenges, and advocacy, our team would no longer have to rely on contractors to set those up for each giving day. We also loved that **GiveCampus** would provide a comprehensive campaign report, making it easier than ever to review our strategy post campaign and make data-based decisions moving forward."

THE RESULTS

An early launch with 7 school instances,19 live giving forms, 3 active social fundraising campaigns—and ZERO downtime

UTFI launched both WordPress, their new web platform, and GiveCampus on February 26, 2024— three days ahead of the go-live date for the CRM. They were able to seamlessly roll out all seven school instances in GiveCampus with 19 live giving forms, three active social fundraising campaigns and zero downtime for donors.

Fun fact: The UT Knoxville alumni website and giving migration happened around 10:45 a.m. on that Monday morning, and less than two hours later the first organic UT Knoxville gift came in via the new GiveCampus form for a whopping $28,000. The team was stunned, "We were like … is this for real?"
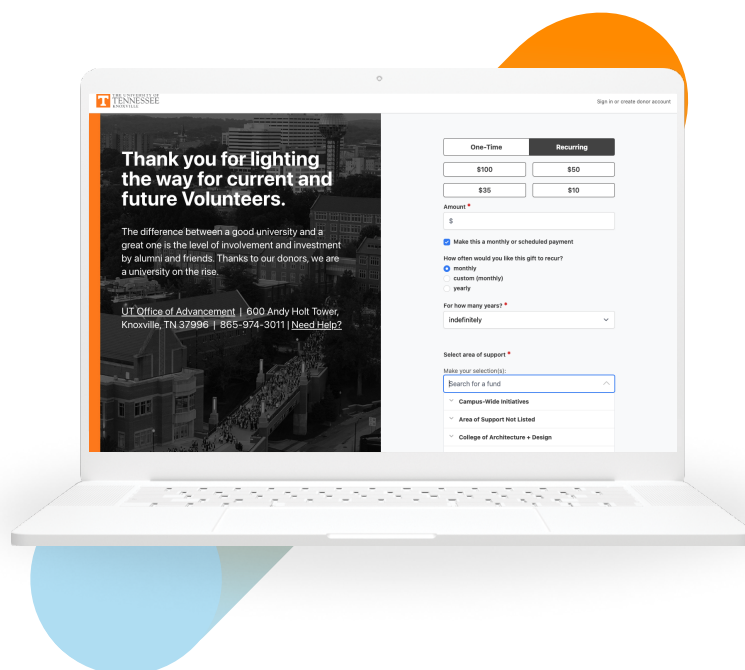
GIVECAMPUS

UTFI went on to host two successful days of giving in April soon after launch, both of which surpassed their goals. By fiscal year end they managed to launch 12 more social fundraising and crowdfunding projects, including one supporting the Vols baseball team after they won the College World Series. Dickman said they were able to prepare the campaign in advance just in case, and then launched the page just minutes after the victory so they could effectively engage donors in the moment.

All told—from February 26 to June 30—the Foundation raised more than $2.3 million online, up 23 percent from the same period the previous year. And 30 percent of those gifts came through a digital wallet option, up 73 percent from the year before.

Despite a successful launch, Brimer says their work is never finished and the team is always looking to improve. Some of their future plans include setting up incomplete gift nudges on all giving forms to catch those donors who start filling out the form but don't quite make it to the payment step. They also plan to build out more specialized forms to support their campus partners, including college-specific forms and pledge fulfillment forms. Finally, they plan to leverage the GiveCampus API to pull in gifts by deposit date to further streamline reporting.

Discover how GiveCampus can help your school raise more dollars from more donors with less effort.

To schedule a demo, please visit:
info.givecampus.com/schedule